GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND AREA POLICY PLAN

PART 2:

COMMERCIAL DRIVE

April 1982

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PART 2: THE DRIVE

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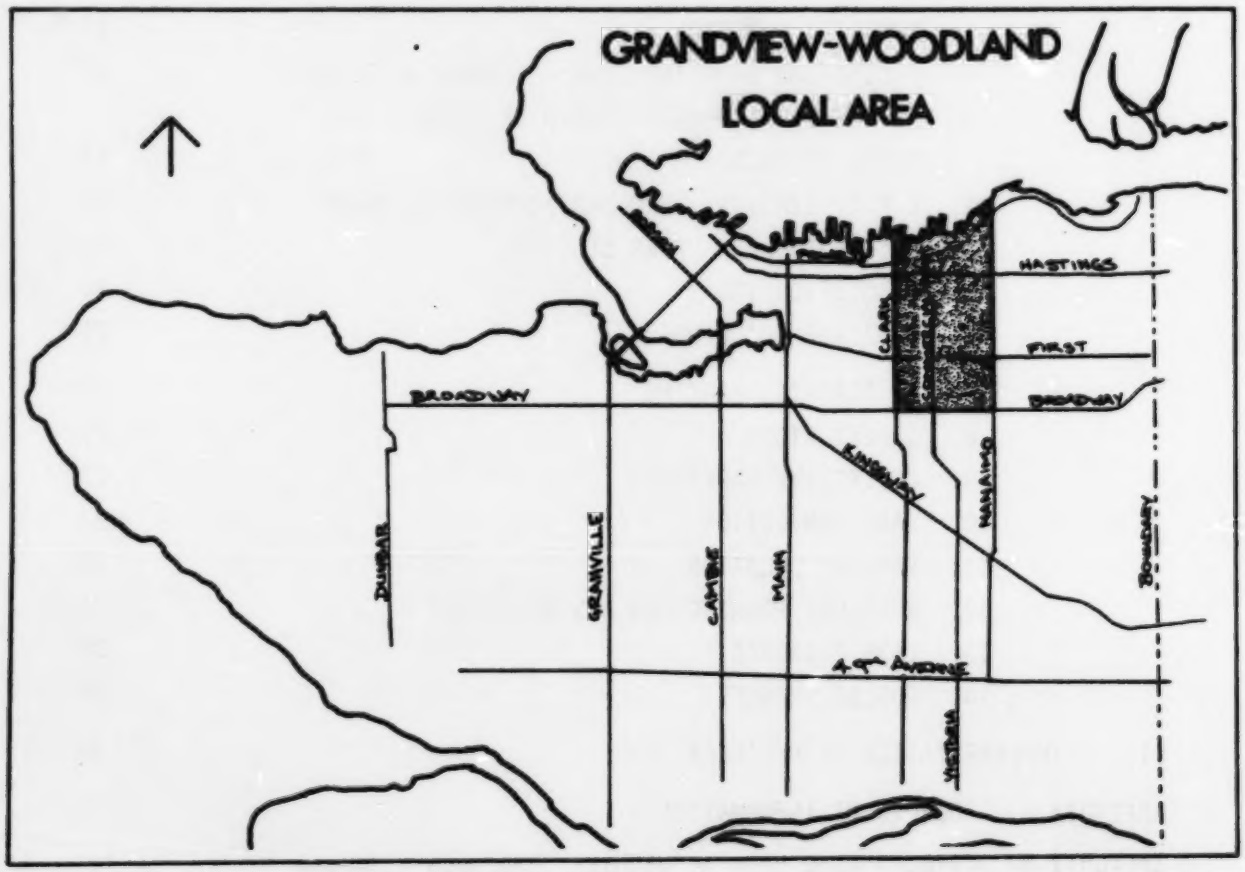
City Planning Department
Vancouver, B.C.
April 1982

PREFACE

On November 4, 1980, City Council endorsed the goals and policies of this plan. (See Appendix B for Council resolutions.) To implement the land use and development policies of the plan, Council, after a Public Hearing on June 25, 1981, approved new zoning schedules for Commercial Drive: from C-2 to C-2C and C-2C1. Implementation of other policies has been referred to appropriate civic departments for further work.



I. BACKGROUND:

LOCAL AREA PLANNING IN GRANDVIEW~WOODLAND

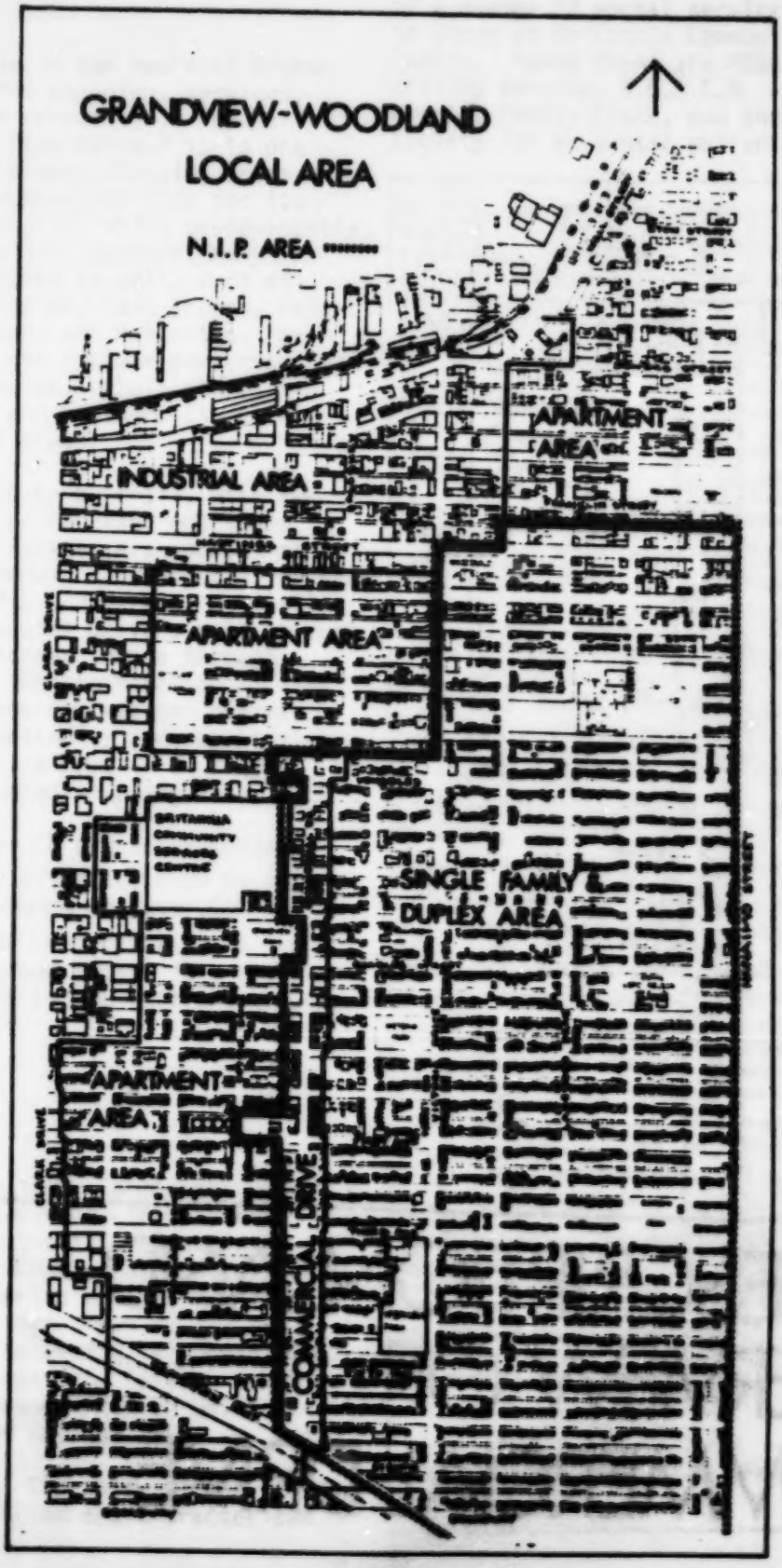
This is Part Two of the Grandview-Woodland Area Policy Plan: COMMERCIAL DRIVE from Venables to Broadway, the shopping centre of Grandview. Part One of the Plan, adopted by City Council in June 1980, established policies for the single family and duplex residential areas east of Commercial Drive. Future parts of the Plan will be for the industrial and apartment areas west of Commercial Drive and north of Hastings Street.

Local Area Planning was established in Grandview-Woodland by City Council in July 1975. The program was initiated in response to repeated requests from local citizens' groups. Also, Grandview-Woodland was identified by the Planning Department as a priority for planning attention because of the many and varied pressures for physical and social change. Local issues included future housing types and population composition in the area, as well as traffic and parking, parks and recreation, and vitality of local shopping areas.

A neighbourhood planning office was opened in Britannia Community Services Centre, and the Planning Department was instructed to review existing City Planning policies in consultation with residents, merchants, and property owners. Local people have been involved through various ongoing committees and subcommittees, as well as newsletters, newspapers articles, questionaires, and public meetings.

The resulting Grandview-Woodland Area Policy Plan, when adopted by City Council, is an explicit statemnt of planning intent to guide physical and social change. The Plan is intended to address local social, physical and economic issues, and to provide a context in which planning decisions can be made.

To complement Local Area Planning, the Neighbourhood Improvement Program came to a portion of Grandview-Woodland in 1976, providing $2.6 million Federal, Provincial and City funds for capital improvements. In designating the area for N.I.P., City Council reinforced the land use stability and emphasized retention and rehabilitation of existing housing and improvement of services for existing residents. Due to revised federal guidelines for N.I.P. area selection, only non-apartment zoned residential and associated local commercial areas were eligible. This meant that the Grandview-Woodland N.I.P. area included only Commercial Drive and the residential areas to the east. Commercial Drive specifically received N.I.P. attention: over $175,000.00 was appropriated for a beautification scheme including trees, shrubs, benches and pedestrian lighting, and a further $63,000.00 was appropriated to combine with other City money and property owners' money for a sidewalk beautification.


GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND
LOCAL AREA
N.I.P. AREA
APARTMENT AREA
INDUSTRIAL AREA
APARTMENT AREA
SINGLE FAMILY
DUPLEX AREA
APARTMENT AREA
COMMERCIAL DRIVE

II. DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF COMMERCIAL DRIVE

A. CHARACTERISTICS

Commercial Drive is the heart of Grandview-Woodland for shopping, services, socializing and recreation. Popularly referred to as "the Drive," it is one of Vancouver's oldest shopping areas and known throughout the City for its cosmopolitan nature. While predominantly Italian, businesses represent many other nationalities as well, such as Portuguese, Ukranian, East Indian, Chinese, Scandanavian, and Hungarian. Services on the Drive include government and non-profit agencies, retail stores and local offices, and restaurants, coffee bars and ethnic clubs.

Storefronts tend to be small, with awnings, canopies or recessed entrances. Tile and brick facades are common, as well as bay windows on residential upper storeys. Traffic and parking congestion reinforce Commercial Drive's role as more of a shopping street than a through traffic route. The combination of small frontages, pedestrian weather protection, retail continuity and opportunities to socialize results in a very pedestrian-oriented shopping area.

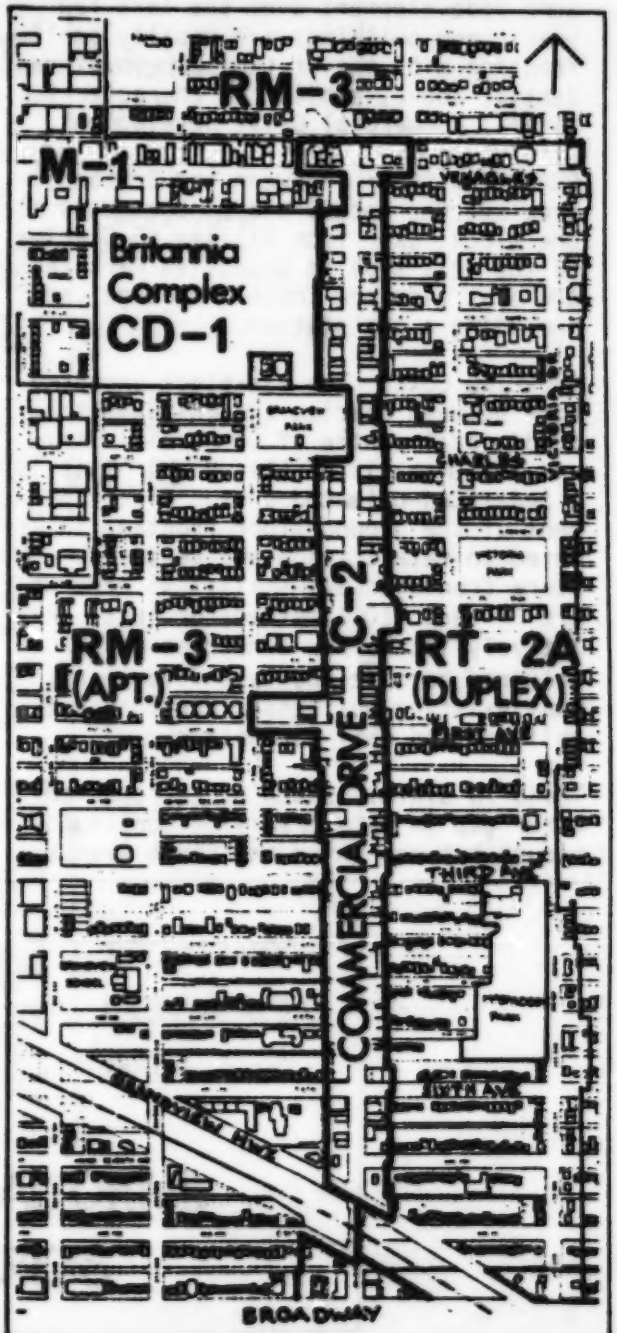
Commercial Drive is presently zoned C-2 (Commercial District) from Venables south to 15th Avenue in Cedar Cottage.

On both sides of Commercial Drive are residentially zoned areas: the apartment-zoned areas to the west and duplex area to the east.

B. SUB-AREAS

On closer inspection, Commercial Drive can actually be divided into several sub-areas. The traditional shopping core is between Charles and Third. To the north of Charles and to the south of Third are fringe areas of lesser retail/service intensity, although each has its own character. Farther south is the Broadway/Commercial area which extends into Cedar Cottage.

BRITANNIA AREA: The three blocks between Venables and William are characterized by a number of social services in addition to those at Britannia Community Services Centre. Among these are MOSAIC - interpreting service, R.E.A.C.H. - health clinic, Family Place, and the Kettle Society for ex-mental patients. There



GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND LOCAL AREA: ZONING MAP

are also several small restaurants and take-out food outlets, catering to local workers and to Britannia high school students. Interspersed among these uses are second hand stores, distributers, printers and a variety of other small scale uses. This area has experienced some redevelopment over the last few years; new buildings are usually small frontage with one or two storeys of residential above, similar in character to typical Commercial Drive development.

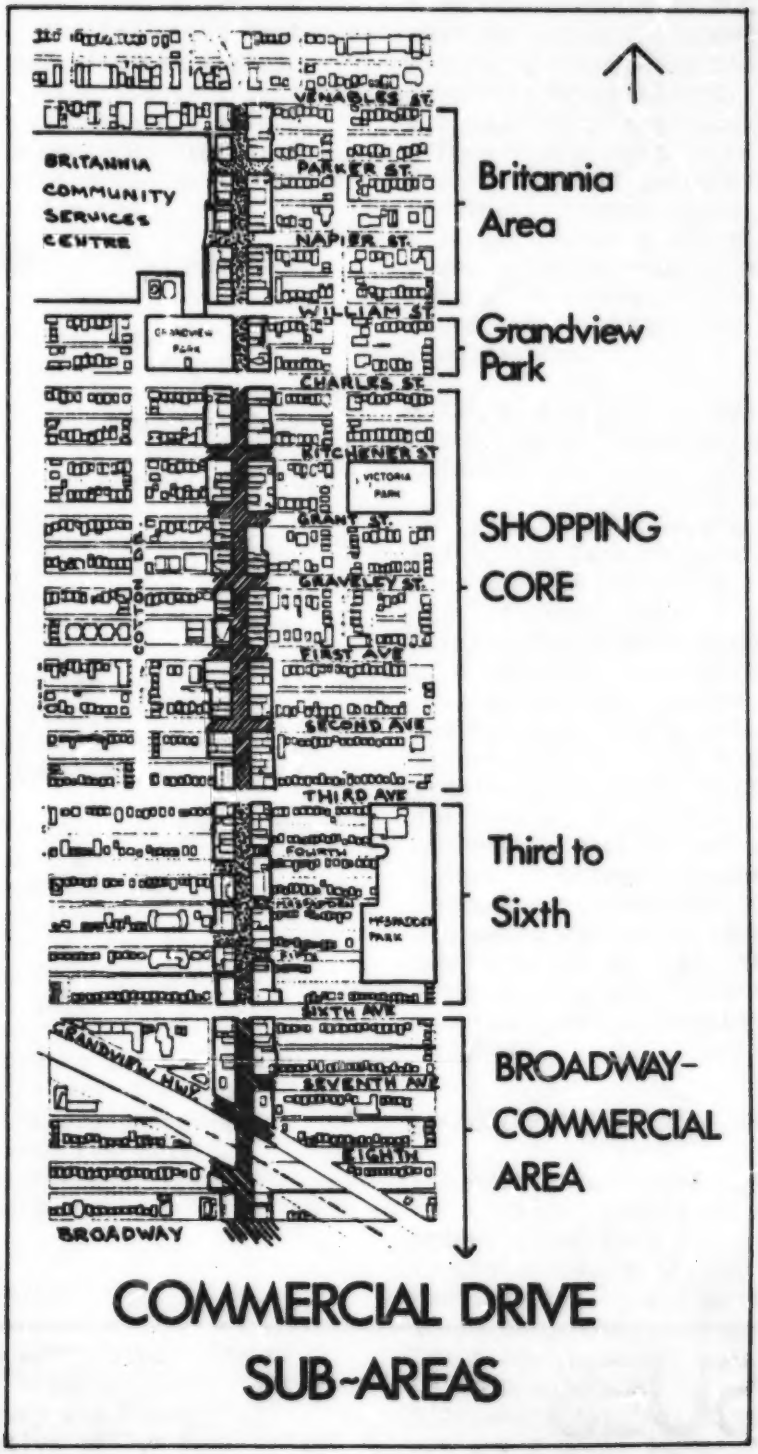
GRANDVIEW PARK: Between the Britannia area and the retail shopping core is a one block "gap" from William to Charles. On the west side is Grandview Park and on the east side are longer frontage uses including a gas station.

SHOPPING CORE: The six-block shopping core between Charles and Third is the traditional centre of Commercial Dirve and the emphasis of this Plan. This is a pedestian-oriented area. Ninety percent of the ground floor frontage is devoted to retail trade and services. Store frontages are small: 95 percent are 33 feet (10.1 metres) or less. Relatively little new construction has occurred here in the last five years. Many existing businesses are long-established and well-patronized.

THIRD TO SIXTH: South of the core another gap in retail/service continuity occurs between Third and Sixth Avenues. This section of the Drive has the most auto-oriented uses and parking lots - 25 percent of the frontage is auto-oriented. Other uses are a mixture including ground floor residential, wholesale, and special trade contractors, as well as retail uses. There has been no new construction in this area in the last few years.

BROADWAY/COMMERCIAL AREA: This section from Sixth to Twelfth Avenues extends from Grandview-Woodland into Cedar Cottage. Distinct from the Commercial Drive shopping core in both location and character, this area located around the intersection of two major bus routes, is another commercial centre. There are a number of large, new buildings, including medical/dental offices and a department store. New uses have long frontages and are one-storey or have office uses on the second and third storeys rather than residential. A Safeway supermarket is also located nearby on Broadway, east of Commercial. Older uses are small frontage (bakeries, restaurants, grocery stores, etc.).

A 1978 Planning Department report observed the number of new office buildings around Broadway and Commerical, and raised the question that these might be considered as speculative office development related to the Light Rapid Transit station proposed for this location.


VENABLES ST.
BRITANNIA COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE
PARKER ST.
NAPIER ST.
WILLIAM ST.
Grandview Park
CHARLES ST.
KITCHENER ST.
Victoria Park
GRANT ST.
GRAVELEY ST.
FIRST AVE
SECOND AVE
THIRD AVE
FOURTH
Britannia Area
SHOPPING CORE
Third to Sixth
SIXTH AVE
GRANDVIEW HWY
SEVENTH AVE
EIGHTH
BROADWAY
BROADWAY-COMMERCIAL AREA
COMMERCIAL DRIVE
SUB-AREAS

III. ISSUES ON THE DRIVE

Specific issues and trends identified during the planning process are described below. In many cases, particular actions are recommended in the following sections of this Plan to deal with the issues. In other instances, the issues are broader than this Plan can directly affect. Nevertheless, the concerns expressed should form part of the context in which planning decisions are made.

- FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: DESIGN AND TYPES OF BUSINESSES

Based on the Zoning and Development By-law, future development does not necessarily have to reflect the existing character and function of Commercial Drive: its retail emphasis, its pedestrian orientation, and other characteristics. The same C-2 zoning applies to most of the City's retail shopping districts and also to general business areas such as Kingsway. Supermarkets and large discount stores set behind parking lots, office buildings, and parking areas and garages are some of the uses which are not characteristic of Commercial Drive's shopping core, but which are permitted as outright uses under the C-2 zoning.

An example of this issue is the northwest corner of First and Commercial. The site is very large - 34,800 square feet (3 233 m^2) - extending from Commercial Drive to Cotton Drive, and the present uses are very low density compared to what is permitted under the C-2 zoning. A new development could be constructed which would conform to the C-2 zoning, but, as described above, the type of business and/or the design would not necessarily fit into the existing Commercial Drive character nor contribute to the Drive's economic vitality.

- LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT

The proposed New Westminster line of the L.R.T. would have an "activity centre" station at Broadway and Commercial. Already, speculative office development may be taking place in this area. The impacts of development on the immediate area as well as on the rest of the Drive have yet to be investigated.

- OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

A feared increase in regional office development in C-2 commercial zoning districts throughout the City has not generally materialized. The concern has been that large-scale ground floor office development in retail shopping districts would interrupt retail continutiy. This issue is also part of a larger planning effort: the G.V.R.D. Livable Region Program whereby development of more new offices would be encouraged outside Vancouver in regional town centres.

- PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND OVERFLOW ONTO ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL STREETS

An issue to local residents and merchants alike, the lack of parking is a continuing problem caused by the age of existing buildings, which pre-date by-law parking requirements, and by the lack of a complete lane system. The lack of on-site parking results in parking congestion overflowing onto residential streets. Also, when expanding to larger premises, merchants must seek property for parking in adjacent residential areas, or request parking relaxations. Animosity between merchants and City, between merchants and local residents, and among merchants themselves has been created in some instances. Collective parking was proposed once some years ago but final agreement was never reached.

- BEAUTIFICATION AND SIDEWALKS

The most often-heard complaint about the physical condition of Commercial Drive, other than the lack of parking, is the condition of the sidewalks. Puddles, cracks and an irregular pattern of paved and unpaved sections of the front boulevard strip are noticeable. To complement N.I.P. - funded beautification, merchants will soon be asked to approve a Local Improvement for new sidewalks in the core area to be subsidized with additional N.I.P. money. Sidewalks outside the core are not included in the beautification.

• HIGH RENTS

Merchants are concerned about rent increases on the Drive, and local residents are concerned that increased costs to the merchants will increase the prices of goods. Sometimes rent increases result from new development, or from new owners of existing development. This also means that Local Improvement charges for sidewalk beautification and for collective parking will be considered very carefully be local merchants and property owners. Because of these concerns, N.I.P. money has been spent on a beautification scheme of trees, shrubs, benches and lighting, and further N.I.P. money has been appropriated to help property owners pay the cost of the new sidewalk proposed for the core area. Also, the N.I.P. Committee and Grandview-Woodland Area Council have discussed alternative types of business tax to provide more of a break to small businesses; these groups may pursue this issue in more depth in the future.

•SPECIFIC USES

Various specific uses which have, or may, become issues are listed below. They provide specific examples of the often larger issues listed in this section.

•LIQUOR STORE: The Liquor Store at the southeast corner of Commercial and Grant has come under fire from local residents because it generates considerable traffic and parking congestion on Commercial Drive and on Grant Street as well as causing loitering and litter in front of the store and in nearby Victoria Park. It has been of the latest closing Liquor Stores in the City and one of the few without a large supermarket parking area adjacent. However, some merchants believe a Liquor Store brings more shoppers and some residents enjoy the convenience. Local residents and merchants have worked with the Social Planning Department and a number of solutions were reported to Council this summer; Social Planning will also report back on results.

•SUPERMARKET: This has been a well-publicized issue in Hastings-Sunrise, and could emerge on Commercial Drive as well. Large supermarkets exist near Broadway and Commercial and at Nanaimo and Charles, but the present supermarket on First Avenue just west of Commercial is a small, older store. The low density of development at this large site which fronts both Commercial and First makes it a likely target for redevelopment: would/should this supermarket be replaced with another? are new large frontage developments desirable in Commercial Drive's pedestrian shopping core? what would the effects be on the pedestrian nature of the Drive? and on the nearby small businesses? While a supermarket can serve as an important part of a district shopping centre, its design can encourage or discourage pedestrian movement to and from other businesses along the street.

•RESTAURANTS AND "NIGHTLIFE": While part of Commercial Drive's unique character rests on its all-hours activity and variety, these same aspects can cause concern to both merchants and residents. Restaurants, coffee bars, pool rooms and social clubs causes complaints of late night noise, parking congestion, usurping of daytime retail uses and a general "nightlife" image. Can Commercial Drive be both an ethnic "character area" with a metropolitan - wide market and a retail shopping district for local residents? Also, what is the balance between day and night-oriented uses and between Commercial Drive and its adjacent residential area?

•MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

The variety of ethnic groups and other affiliations on the Drive has made it difficult for any merchants group to exist for long. Yet, many of the issues described here could be better dealt with if there were a continuing merchants association, or merchants voice within other local groups such as the Area Council. In response to recent N.I.P. and planning proposals, the merchants have formed a new Chamber of Commerce.

•FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS

The goods and services available on Commercial Drive have responded to the shopping patterns and needs of the local population in the adjacent residential area: children's clothing stores reflecting the family emphasis; hardware and home furnishing stores reflecting the interest in home improvements; thrift and second hand stores and social agencies reflecting the lower income levels; small speciality shops reflecting the ethnic population; and the pedestrian orientation reflecting the relatively high density of adjacent residential areas so that many local residents are within easy walking distance of the Drive. Therefore, other parts of the Area Plan, containing policies for Grandview's residential areas,will also have impacts on Commercial Drive. Part One of the Area Plan,approved for the area east of Commercial Drive, has goals to retain the population mix and density of the neighbourhood. Future parts of the Area Plan to deal with the area west of Commercial Drive have not yet been completed.

•CONTINUING ETHNIC CHARACTER

Commercial Drive's Italian businesses originally grew in number after Italian residents had become a significant proportion of the neighbourhood population. However, even as the Italian population has now begun to decline in Grandview-Woodland, Italian businesses have continued to increase both in absolute numbers and as a percentage. Italians moving out of Grandview-Woodland have generally dispersed rather than relocating in a concentrated area (although North Burnaby's Italian population has been increasing). Thus for Italians in the suburbs, Commercial Drive still offers a unique concentration and variety of Italian goods and services. Non-Italians also shop increasingly on Commercial Drive for the Italian goods.

Other ethnic groups moving into Grandview-Woodland have also begun to have an impact on Commercial Drive. East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Hungarian, and Scandanavian businesses can be found.

This ethnic orientation is to some extent reinforced by market forces. In order to compete with large shopping centres and supermarktes, district shopping centres emphasize distinctive traits, which for Commercial Drive, Kitsilano's West Broadway and Japantown in the Oppenheimer Area, for example, are their ethnic orientations.

•COMMERCIAL BLIGHT

The Planning Department's 1971 "Suburban Commercial Study" identified Commercial Drive - largely due to age - as one of the commercial areas exhibiting the most visible signs of commercial "blight". Many of the solutions suggested in that report are recommended in the policies which follow: collective off-street parking, beautification schemes, and zoning to protect existing retail areas.

IV. GOALS FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVE'S FUTURE

To address issues identified in the previous section and to reinforce positive aspects of Commercial Drive while ameliorating problems, the following goals have been determined as a general guide for the future. These goals are interrelated. The first two, for example, describe Commercial Drive as both a district centre serving neighbourhood residents and a unique shopping area in Vancouver attracting shoppers from throughout the City and adjoining suburbs.

1. MAINTAIN COMMERCIAL DRIVE AS A DISTRICT RETAIL SHOPPING CENTRE - I.E., PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

2. ENHANCE THE DRIVE'S UNIQUE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CHARACTER: RETAIL CONTINUITY, DIVERSITY OF GOODS AND SERVICES, ETHNIC EMPHASIS, DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS, PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTATION

3. REINFORCE THE CHARLES STREET TO THIRD AVENUE AREA AS THE SHOPPING CORE OF COMMERCIAL DRIVE

4. PROVIDE OFF-STREET PARKING AND IMPROVED LANE ACCESS

5. IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE DRIVE

6. REDUCE CONFLICTS BETWEEN COMMERCIAL USES AND NEAR-BY RESIDENTIAL AREAS: NOISE, TRAFFIC, PARKING

7. PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF COMMERCIAL DRIVE'S SMALL-SCALE BUSINESSES

8. ENCOURAGE MERCHANT PARTICIPATION THROUGH A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND ON THE GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND AREA COUNCIL AND/OR OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

V. POLICIES

A. DEVELOPMENT

POLICY 1

DISTRICT FUNCTION

THE ROLE OF COMMERCIAL DRIVE SHOULD REMAIN A DISTRICT COMMERCIAL CENTRE SERVING RESIDENTS OF GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND.

Commercial Drive is a district shopping centre. This means that goods and services are available for a residential district of about 25,000 to 30,000 within a 3/4 to one mile (1.2 to 1.6 kilometre) radius. District centres provide a range of businesses from convenience goods and services (groceries, cleaners, etc.); to comparison shopping stores (such as shoes, clothing, appliances); to community uses (such as social agencies, library, entertainment).

District centres are different from local or regional centres or from general business areas. Local centres provide only day-to-day convenience goods and services (e.g., groceries, laundromat). Regional centres and general business areas, on the other hand, serve a metropolitan-wide market, and often provide goods and services which represent major, infrequent purchases for a household (e.g., car sales).

The breakdown of specific uses on Commercial Drive shows that district commercial uses account for 59 percent of the frontage between Venables and Broadway, followed by 30 percent local uses and 11 percent regional uses.

POLICY 2
PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING CORE: CHARLES TO THIRD

THE SIX BLOCKS OF COMMERCIAL DRIVE BETWEEN CHARLES STREET AND THIRD AVENUE SHOULD BE REINFORCED AS THE PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING CORE, THROUGH THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

(a) TO ENSURE A VARIETY OF USES, SMALL FRONTAGES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED, WITH THE MAXIMUM FRONTAGE OF EACH USE GENERALLY LIMITED TO 50 FEET (15.2 METRES).

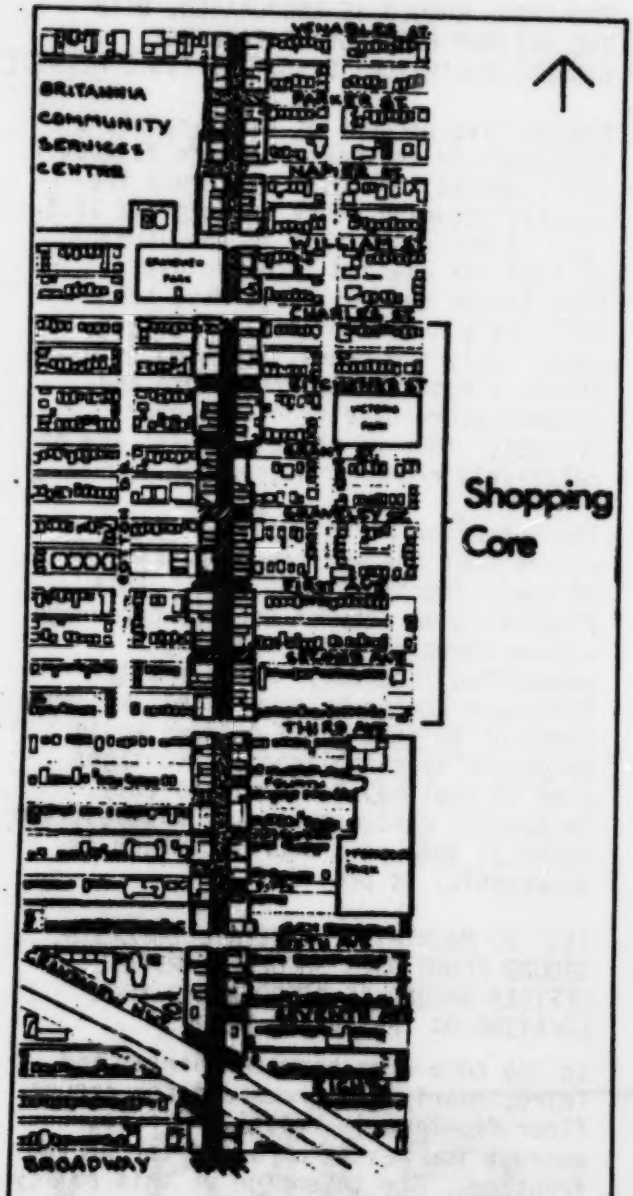
Ninety-five percent of existing store frontages in the core area are 33 feet (10.1 metres) or less. The most frequently occuring store frontage is 16.5 feet (5 metres); this is the usual 33 foot lot divided into two uses. Even larger new buildings have been built as a number of small frontage uses. Only two banks, the Liquor Store, a restaurant, drug store and grocery store have frontages over 50 feet; four of these six uses are of relatively recent construction.

The intention of this policy is to ensure that the existing predominance of small frontages continues. This provides a variety of uses to encourage window-shopping and continuing pedestrian interest. While smaller frontages are to be encouraged, an upper limit of 50 feet (15.2 metres) would be generally established. Frontages over 50 feet may be permitted only in special circumstances if a pedestrian amenity, such as a couryard which is acceptable, is provided.

(b) TO MAINTAIN THE RETAIL EMPHASIS, GROUND FLOOR USES SHOULD BE RETAIL; OFFICES SHOULD BE DISCOURAGED FROM LOCATING ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

In the core area between Charles and Third, nearly 60 percent of the ground floor frontage is retail. Offices account for less than a quarter of the frontage. The intention of this policy is to ensure that office uses are not allowed to break-up the retail continuity.

(c) TO RETAIN PEDESTRIAN CONTINUITY, AUTO-ORIENTED USES AND PARKING LOTS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED, AND EACH BUILDING SHOULD BE LOCATED AT ITS FRONT PROPERTY LINE WITHOUT FRONT SETBACKS OR FRONT YARDS, UNLESS IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES A PEDESTRIAN OR SHOPPING COURTYARD OR OTHER PEDESTRIAN FEATURE IS PROVIDED.



COMMERCIAL DRIVE: Shopping Core

The Charles to Third Avenue core is mainly a continuous retail strip. There are only three breaks, each for parking areas - one adjacent to a bank, one adjacent to a hardware store, and the third in front of a tool rental store.

(d) TO PRESERVE THE TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL DRIVE CHARACTER, EXISTING DESIGN FEATURES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED IN NEW BUILDINGS.

Although not actually required in the Zoning and Development By-law, these are design elements which are characteristic of existing buildings on Commercial Drive and which should be encouraged in new buildings:

- awnings, canopies and/or recessed entrances for weather protection as well as visual character
- similar facade materials and colours
- bay windows on residential upper storeys
- pedestrian-oriented display windows (full-facade)
- expression of small individual uses (tenancies) within larger building facades
- extension of uses around the corner from Commercial Drive onto adjacent side streets in cases where conflict with residential will not be created - display windows, outdoor cafe extensions, entrances to non-retail uses such as banks.

BAY WINDOWS: Most of the above design features can be encouraged by the Director of Planning as part of the development permit process. The one exception is bay windows on upper storeys. Although these are a common feature on older buildings along Commercial Drive, the Vancouver Building By-law does not allow such encroachments over City sidewalks for new buildings. Setting back the entire building so that the upper storey bay windows project only up to the property line is one alternative, but this is not desirable for Commercial Drive because the traditional character is bay windows projecting over the sidewalk, and also because lot depths

are shallow and setbacks would further limit ground floor retail floor space which is vital in a retail area. Therefore, in order to allow new buildings to provide this desirable architectural feature, the Director of Planning recommends that staff report back on appropriate amendments to the Vancouver Building By-law.

POLICY 3
FRINGE DEVELOPMENT: NORTH OF CHARLES AND SOUTH OF THIRD

IN THE AREAS NORTH (CHARLES TO VENABLES) AND SOUTH (THIRD TO SIXTH) OF THE PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING CORE, GENERAL BUSINESS AND AUTO-ORIENTED USES, AS WELL AS SMALL SCALE RETAIL AND SERVICES, SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PERMITTED.

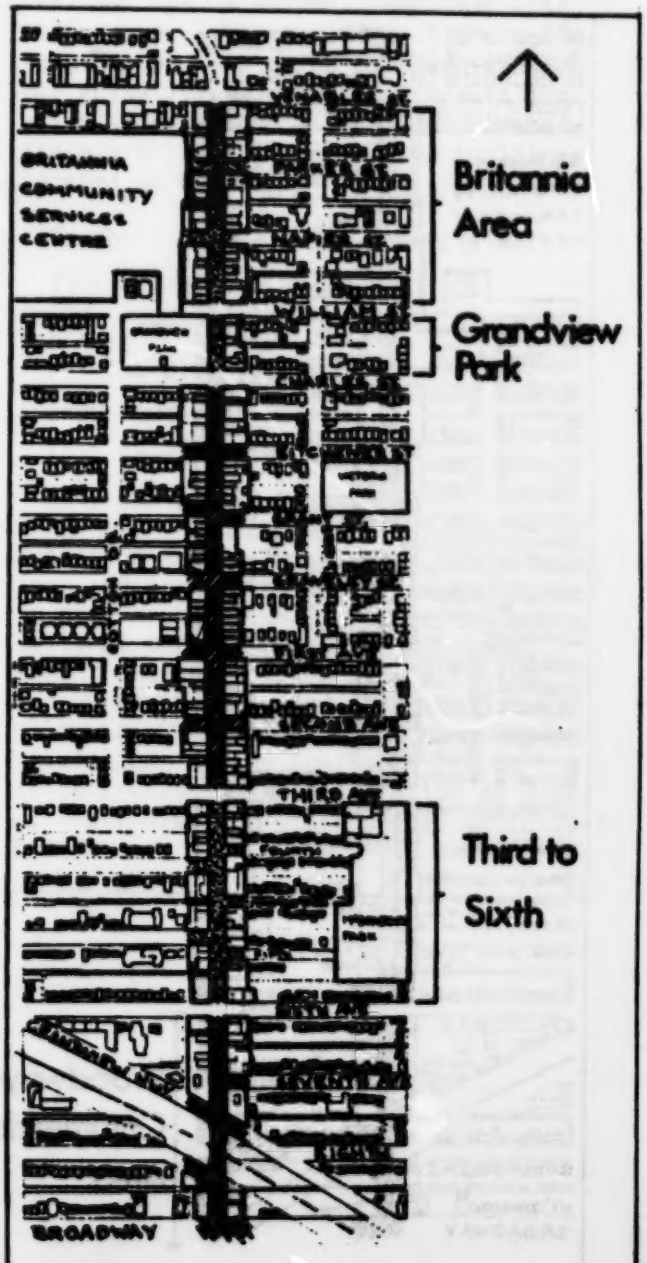
The intention of this policy is outlined in the criteria below:

- The existing types of fringe area uses should be allowed to continue - ie., the social services in the Britannia area north of the core, and the auto-oriented and home fixture stores south of the core, as well as the small retail uses interspersed thoughout.

- The fringe areas should be different from the core - the pedestrian-oriented retail uses in the core should be concentrated enough to remain economically viable. Uses in the fringe areas should not detract from existing shoping in the core.

- The fringe area uses should provide a location for general business and auto-oriented uses - uses which should not infiltrate the core where they would interrupt retail continuity.

- The fringe areas should continue to be district oriented - ie., providing goods and services for this neighbourhood.



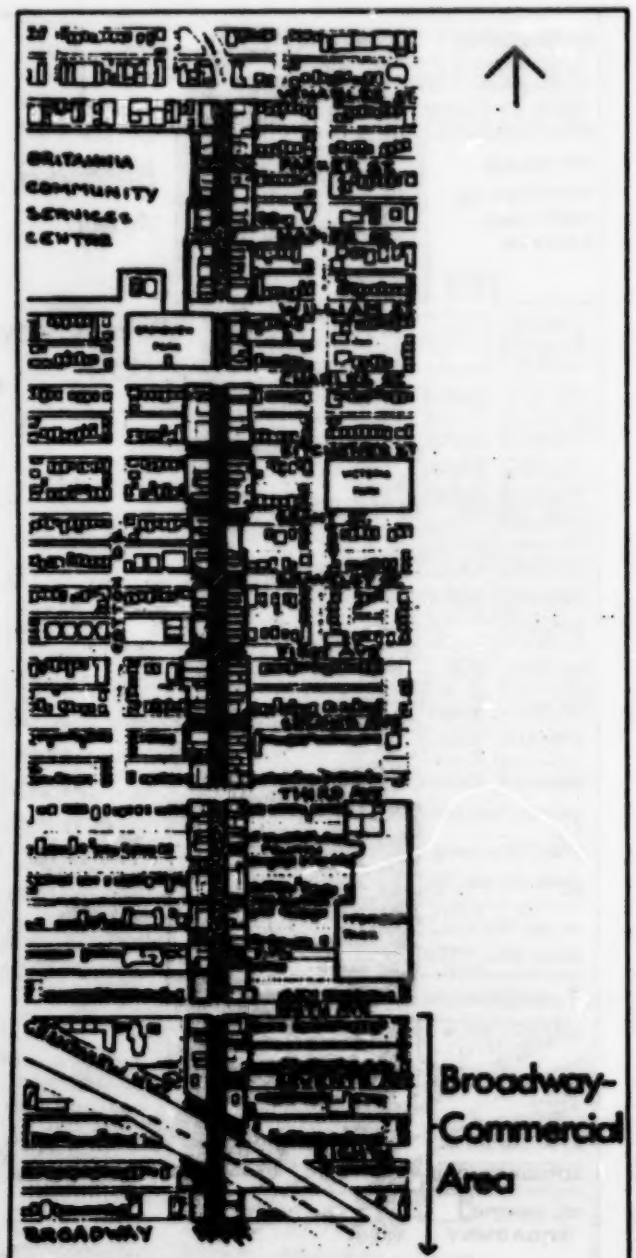
COMMERCIAL DRIVE: Fringe Areas

POLICY 4

L.R.T. STATION: BROADWAY/COMMERCIAL AREA

A STATION AREA PLANNING STUDY SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AROUND THE PROPOSED BROADWAY AND COMMERCIAL LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT STATION TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS FOR THIS AREA, AND ALSO TO ASSESS AND DEAL WITH IMPACTS ON THE COMMERCIAL DRIVE SHOPPING CORE TO THE NORTH.

An October 1978 Planning Department report raised the question of speculative office construction around potential L.R.T. stations - particulary Broadway/Commercial and 41st/West Boulevard. In the Broadway/Commercial area, new development extends from Sixth Avenue south along Commercial Drive into Cedar Cottage. The proposed Broadway/Commercial station has been designated as an " "activity centre" station. Council, in February 1980, authorized the Planning Department to prepare a work program for a community impact study around proposed stations. This will be reported to Council when L.R.T. receives the go-ahead. Such a study should address not only the desired development and traffic effects directly around the station area itself, but also should assess impacts on the other parts of Commercial Drive so that the goals of this Plan for a pedestrian, retail shoping core between Charles and Third are reinforced.



COMMERCIAL DRIVE:
Broadway/Commercial Area

POLICY 5

RESIDENTIAL ON UPPER STOREYS

RESIDENTIAL USES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED ON UPPER STOREYS OF COMMERCIAL USES ALONG COMMERCIAL DRIVE.

Of the 40 percent of the Commercial Drive frontage which has above-ground uses, 80 percent is residential. Residential uses are generally desirable on Commercial Drive because they add to the all-hours use and thus to the sense of security, and also because they provide customers close to the businesses. Existing zoning discourages residential by restricting floor space for residential to less than the floor space allowed for retail and office.

POLICY 6

BEAUTIFICATION

THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF COMMERCIAL DRIVE SHOULD BE IMPROVED: A VARIETY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES SHOULD BE EXPLORED

N.I.P.-funded beautification in the form of pedestrian lighting, trees and shrubs, benches, and litter containers has already helped to improve the appearance of the Drive. Other ways to improve its appearance are:

- Banners with a local or ethnic theme should be provided during the summer months as part of the banner program. The banner clips are already provided with N.I.P. funds.

- To complement the N.I.P. beautification, a Local Improvement process will be initiated to have the property owners "vote" on paying the costs of a new sidewalk in the Charles to Third core area. Extensive discussions on the costs of this project have resulted in Council approval of a N.I.P. subsidy to the property owners to lower their share of the costs.

POLICY 7

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

RETENTION AND RESTORATION OF HERITAGE MERIT BUILDINGS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

The report, VANCOUVER'S BUILDING HERITAGE (Nancy Oliver, Vancouver City Planning Department, 1977), lists buildings of heritage merit although they do not actually meet the requirements for official heritage designation. Among these are the following seven buildings located on Commercial Drive:

Campbell Block, 1046 Commercial Dr.

1301 Commercial Drive

1404 Commercial Drive

Belmont Block, 1435 Commercial Dr.

1700 Commercial Drive

1938 Commercial Drive

1941 Commercial Drive

Retention and restoration of these buildings and any others which can be shown to have architectural, historical or cultural merit should be encouraged. Recent changes to Vancouver's Zoning and Development By-law (Section 3.2.6) allow the Director of Planning to relax regulations of the Zoning By-law to allow renovation or restoration of sites with architectural, historical or cultural merit.

B. STREETS, TRAFFIC, PARKING

POLICY 8

STREET WIDTH

COMMERCIAL DRIVE SHOULD RETAIN ITS PRESENT CURB-TO-CURB STREET WIDTH AND CURBSIDE PARKING: ANY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THE FURTURE FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVE OR FIRST AVENUE SHOULD BE FIRST DISCUSSED WITH AREA RESIDENTS AND MERCHANTS FOR REPORT TO COUNCIL.

Commercial Drive north of First Avenue is one lane in each direction with parking on both sides except during rush hours when parking is only allowed on alternate sides of the street. South of First Avenue, the street is wider with two lanes of traffic in each direction and parking allowed on both sides at all times. There is no Building Line established in the Zoning By-law to provide for future street widening. Plans do exist for street widening near the First and Commercial and the Venables and Commercial intersections for left-turn bays.

Maintaining the existing street width and curbside parking is important for a number of reasons which reinforce the development policies in the previous section of this Plan. Due to the existing street width and shopping activity, traffic is slower and Commercial Drive is not as attractive to through traffic as Nanaimo and Clark which carry about twice the volume as Commercial. This in turn reinforces the pedestrian nature of the Drive, and makes it a more amenable location for window-shopping and pedestrian-oriented businesses than for auto-oriented uses, such as gas stations. The slower traffic means it is also safer for pedestrians to cross the street. Furthermore, the curbside parking provides much needed parking and acts as a buffer between the sidewalk and the moving traffic. Finally, the lower traffic volumes make Commercial Drive a more acceptable environment for residential uses above commercial uses.

However, in addition to these positive aspects, there is also the negative impact of traffic overflow onto residential streets. The Traffic Study, approved in the Grandview-Woodland Area Plan Part One, will be recommending measures to reduce the impacts of some of this traffic.

First Avenue is also mentioned in this policy because, though not a shopping street, its heavy traffic flow cuts through the heart of the Commercial Drive shopping core. Future proposals for street widening could therefore have an impact which should be discussed before any changes are made.

POLICY 9

COLLECTIVE PARKING

THE FEASIBILITY OF A SMALL SCALE COLLECTIVE PARKING PROJECT SHOULD BE EXPLORED FOR THE COMMERCIAL DRIVE CORE SHOPPING AREA.

Parking is one of the key issues on Commercial Drive - to merchants and to residents on adjacent side streets. A parking study by the Engineering Department identified three blocks, between Kitchener and First on the east side, which are 100 percent occupied by parked cares all or most of the day. The study also showed that the west side of the Drive is well used for parking with 100 percent occupancy around noon and parts of the afternoon. Grant Street was identified as the residential street with the highest parking occupancy.

Curbside parking on Commercial Drive is allowed on both sides except during rush hours when one lane of parking is eliminated north of First. Many businesses due to the age of buildings and to the lack of a complete lane system do not have organized off-street parking.

A collective parking project is a Local Improvement, requiring the support of at least two-thirds of the property owners representing 50 percent of the assessed value. The owners pay a per front foot (per metre) rate to cover the costs of acquistion and maintainance of a public parking area which the City purchases on their behalf. The three examples in Vancouver are South Fraser, East Hastings, and Kerrisdale, although these are much larger than what would be appropriate for Commercial Drive.

Preliminary investigation by Planning, Engineering, and local merchants suggests that over 50 spaces could be provided via collective parking by locating three or more small lots behind the Commercial Drive core area. Sites chosen should also take advantage of opportunities to complete the lane system (see Policy #10 below). Because costs are a particular concern, specific collective parking proposals must be carefully assessed to ensure that they are within the financial capability of the merchants.

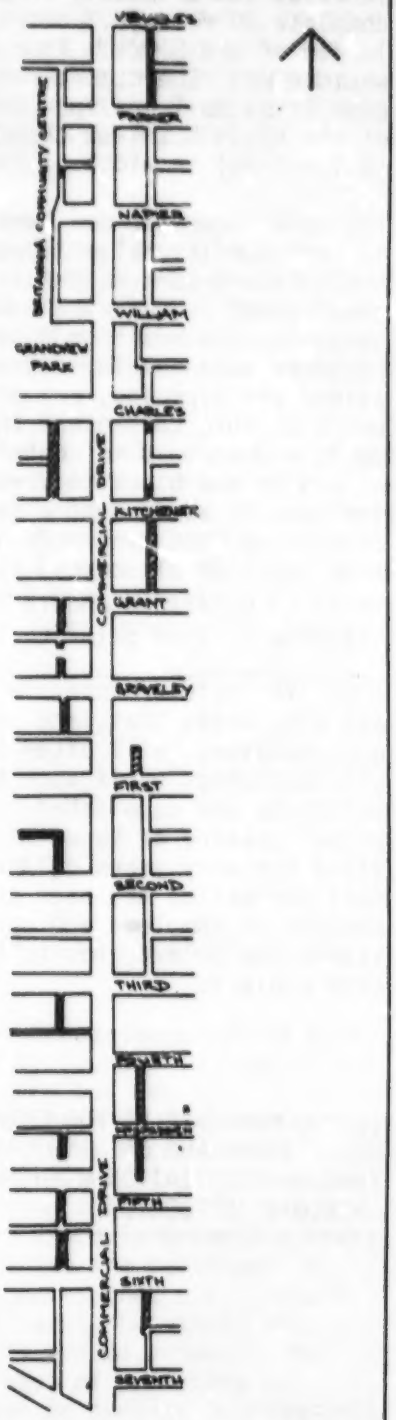
POLICY 10
LANE COMPLETION

THE LANE SYSTEM BEHIND COMMERCIAL DRIVE SHOULD BE COMPLETED TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING - THROUGH THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

(a) LANE DEDICATION SHOULD BE REQUIRED AS A CONDITION OF ANY DEVELOPMENT PERMIT (WITHOUT REDUCING THE SITE AREA FOR FLOOR SPACE RATIO CALCULATIONS).

The lane system behind Commercial Drive is not complete. Parking, loading and garbage collection must often be done on the Commercial Drive side rather than from behind the businesses. This causes a general loss of total parking on Commercial Drive, more congestion in the streets, and sidewalk damage from vehicles.

Of 32 commercial block faces on both sides of Commercial Drive between



LANE SYSTEM:

- 20 FT. (6.09m.) standard lane.
- lane exists but less than 20 ft. standard width.
- lane dedication, but no access.

Venables and Broadway, only nine have complete 20 foot (6.1 metre) lanes the length of the block. Four have no lane whatsoever. The others range from partly open lanes to lanes open the full length of the block but less than 20 feet (6.1 metres) in width.

The policy recommended here would apply to both conditional and outright uses and would be the same as the lane dedication requirement in Fairview's FM-1 zoning schedule. In addition to dedications required when development permit applications are approved, any property owner would be able to request the City property negotiators to contact other owners on the block to arrange for dedications in advance of a development permit, so that lane access can be provided. In all cases, floor space ratio calculations should be based on the size of site prior to lane dedication.

The City Engineer agrees with this policy, but also notes that lane dedication, even once obtained, will often be occupied with buildings until such time as the buildings are demolished. Therefore the actual opening of lanes may not be possible for many years despite the fact the full dedication has been achieved. The process to complete and open the lane system can be expected to be a very long term project.

(b) OPPORTUNITIES FOR OBTAINING LANE DEDICATIONS AND OPENING LANE ACCESS THROUGH NEGOTIATION WITH PROPERTY OWNERS SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

Because Policy #10 (a) is a relatively long term solution, Policy #10 (b) suggests a method to speed up the lane completion process where possible. There are a few locations where there is no land yet dedicated for lane,but where parking areas and driveways or open areas already exist to provide access or the possibility of access behind businesses. In these cases, it is possible that property owners would be willing to dedicate land if the City would in turn develop it as a open lane. Such opportunites could be further explored by civic staff in discussion with the affected property owners.

As this policy may make possible some redevelopment otherwise constrained by lack of lanes, it should only be carried out in conjunction with the policies in Section V-A which recommend desired development controls.

(c) THE CITY SHOULD PURCHASE, SUBDIVIDE, AND RE-SELL PROPERTY IN SELECTED LOCATIONS TO COMPLETE LANES WHERE THEY ARE A HIGH PRIORITY BUT WOULD OTHERWISE NOT BE PROVIDED.

In some cases, lane dedications cannot be completed unless the adjacent residential land also dedicates its half of the required 20 feet (6.1 metres). There may be opportunities for the City to acquire a residential lot, dedicate the required lane and re-sell the new smaller lot for continued residential use. Presumably, adjacent commercial property owners would be charged some amount in return for the lane acquired at the City's expense - possibly as part of the collective parking Local Improvement.

POLICY 11
PARKING LOCATION

(a) ALL OFF-STREET PARKING SHOULD BE PROVIDED ON-SITE AND/OR IN COLLECTIVE PARKING

(b) ON-SITE PARKING AND LOADING IN THE CORE AREA SHOULD BE PROVIDED AT THE REAR OF BUILDINGS WITH ACCESS FROM THE LANE.

Policy #11 (a) means that residential land should not be used for parking, unless as part of a planned collective parking scheme.

Policy #11 (b) would ensure that the retail continuity in the Charles to Third shopping core is not interrupted by parking areas.

POLICY 12
REQUIRED PARKING FOR NEW BUILDINGS

ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL HAVE TO MEET THE PARKING AND LOADING REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING BY-LAW; AND THE IMPACT OF PARKING CONGESTION ON ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL STREETS SHOULD BE MINIMIZED.

When new buildings are constructed on Commercial Drive, they should provide all off-street parking and loading required in the Zoning and Development By-law. Further, where there is already parking congestion on residential streets, and where a proposed development would generate considerable parking and traffic (e.g., a movie theatre), extra care should be taken to reduce conflict with residential, such as by requiring more than the minimum amount of parking.

POLICY 13
LANE CLOSURES

EAST-WEST LANES INTERSECTING COMMERCIAL DRIVE SHOULD BE CLOSED WHEN ALTERNATE NORTH-SOUTH STANDARD LANE OUTLETS ARE DEVELOPED; AND THE CLOSED LANES INVESTIGATED FOR USE AS MINI-PARK, OR SOLD FOR COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT WITH THE PROCEEDS GOING TOWARD IMPLEMENTING THE POLICIES OF THIS PLAN (SUCH AS, LANE COMPLETION, COLLECTIVE PARKING, BEAUTIFICATION).

On several blocks, an east-west lane exits onto Commercial Drive in mid-block causing safety problems for motorists and pedestrians alike. These lanes could be closed if the north-south lanes parallel to Commercial Drive were complete.

The criteria for collective parking sites (Policy) #9) include acquiring sites where there are opportunities to complete a lane. Thus, if the collective parking is successful, some north/south lanes may be completed more quickly and the closure of east-west lanes could then occur.

POLICY 14
PUBLIC TRANSIT

ENCOURAGE USE OF, AND IMPROVEMENTS TO, PUBLIC TRANSIT.

Part One of the Grandview-Woodland Area Plan, approved by Council in June 1979, calls for improved bus service. This bears repetition here as complementary to the above policies recommending parking. Adding a new First Avenue bus route and ensuring adequate frequency on the existing Victoria-Granville route on Commercial Drive are mentioned in Part One which notes that L.R.T. would serve regional needs, but that this neighbourhood is served primarily by bus. Further ways of promoting bus use, in addition to service improvements, are to provide bus shelters and other for forms of weather protection. A number of shelters have been provided with N.I.P. funds, and through the commercial bus shelter program; and canopies and awnings are encouraged in Policy #2 above.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the policies in this Plan requires a range of actions which are described in Table V -1. Some of these actions are accomplished via Council approval of the Plan itself. Others require further work, and these are noted with asteriks. The main actions requiring more work are to incorporate several of the policy recommendations into new zoning schedules, and to initiate collective parking and lane completion.

TABLE VI-1: IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES

POLICY	ACTION REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT
A. DEVELOPMENT	
#1 DISTRICT FUNCTION	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
#2 PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING CORE: CHARLES TO THIRD	
(a) variety of uses	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
(b) retail emphasis	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
(c) pedestrian continuity	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
(d) design guidelines	Director of Planning through development permit process to encourage buildings to provide the design features listed in this Policy. **The Vancouver Building By-law No. 5160 Section 11.1.7.6 (1) to be changed to allow encroachment agreements for newly constructed bay windows to encroach over the front property line.
#3 FRINGE DEVELOPMENT: NORTH OF CHARLES AND SOUTH OF THIRD	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
#4 LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT STATION: BROADWAY/COMMERCIAL AREA	Include concerns of this Plan in the Light Rapid Transit community impact study. (Study approved by Council in principle in February 1980 for report back on details when L.R.T. receives go-ahead.)
#5 RESIDENTIAL ABOVE COMMERCIAL	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
#6 BEAUTIFICATION	City to provide money for annual summer banner program to include banners with a local theme for Commercial Drive. Appropriate N.I.P. funds for trees, pedestrian lighting, etc. - already approved by Council (October 30,1979) and implemented. City to initiate Local Improvement process for sidewalk beautification between Charles and Third - already approved by Council, with N.I.P. subsidy (September 9, 1980).

TABLE VI-1: IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES ...cont'd

POLICY	ACTION REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT
#7 HERITAGE BUILDINGS	Retention and restoration of heritage merit buildings listed in Policy #7, and others of heritage merit, be encouraged by allowing relaxations where appropriate as provided in Section 3.2.6 of the Zoning and Development By-law. (Possible application of Section 3.2.6 to these buildings to be more widely known by "flagging" these addresses in the development files and by making this Plan available to the public.)
B. STREETS, TRAFFIC, PARKING	
#8 STREET WIDTH	Any changes proposed in the future for changes to street width or parking regulations on Commercial Drive or First Avenue to be first discussed with area residents and merchants for report to Council.
#9 COLLECTIVE PARKING	**Civic staff to work with local merchants to examine proposals and determine feasibility for collective parking.
#10 LANE COMPLETION	Council committment to provide funds to open lanes as the dedicated land becomes available through the measures recommended in Policy #10 (a) and (b). (This does not include compensating owners for lane dedications as that is contrary to current City practice)
(a) Lane Dedication	*Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.
(b) Negotiation	**Civic staff to identify opportunities for immediate lane dedication in return for opening of the lane.
(c) Purchase, Subdivide, Resell	**Civic staff to report back on including lane dedications in collective parking; or to report on other methods and financing for completing lanes in selected cases where dedication from adjacent residential land is required.
#11 PARKING LOCATION	(a) Development Permit Applications should not be approved for private parking areas on residential lots.
	(b) *Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law.

TABLE VI-1: IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES ...cont'd

POLICY	ACTION REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT
#12 REQUIRED PARKING FOR NEW BUILDINGS	No parking relaxations to be granted by Director of Planning on Development Permits for new buildings; and special attention should be given to proposed assembly-type uses which would generate considerable traffic and parking on residential streets already suffering congestion - i.e.,traffic impact studies, possibility of requiring more than the minimum parking.
#13 LANE CLOSURES	Engineering to close east-west lane outlets onto Commercial Drive when north-south standard lanes are completed. Council approval in principle that any money from sale of lanes for commercial redevelopment be used to implement the other policies of this plan.
#14 PUBLIC TRANSIT	City to communicate desired bus route improvements to the G.V.R.D. and Urban Transit Authority. Bus shelters to be provided - many already provided with N.I.P. funds and commercial bus shelter program. Awnings and canopies for weather protection to be encouraged (see Policy #2 (d).

*actions which require amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law to implement - see Table VI-2

**actions which require further report

TABLE VI-2: COMPARISON OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED COMMERCIAL ZONING FOR CHARLES TO THIRD SHOPPING CORE

POLICY	EXISTING C-2 ZONING	PROPOSED ZONING
#1 DISTRICT FUNCTION	Permitted uses include regional and general business uses, such as large office buildings and auto-oriented uses.	This is reflected in the type of uses permitted, the maximum frontage etc. - see policies below.
#2 PEDESTRIAN SHOPPING CORE		
(a) variety of uses	No frontage limit or requirement for pedestrian amenity.	Maximum frontage of 50 feet (15.2 metres) per use unless other pedestrian amenity provided.
(b) retail emphasis	Permitted uses include (in addition to retail): offices on ground floor, hotel or motel, auto repair shop, motor vehicle sales lot or showroom, drive-in restaurant, parking garages.	Retail uses encouraged. Offices only permitted on ground floor if cater primarily to needs of the district residents. Auto-oriented uses not permitted.
(c) pedestrian continutiy	Parking areas and parking in front setback permitted.	Parking areas and parking in front of buildings not permitted (see also Policy #11).
#5 RESIDENTIAL ABOVE COMMERCIAL	Floor space ratio (i.e., area of building) lower for residential than for office.	Floor space ratio (i.e., area of building) for residential the same as, or higher than, for office.
#10 LANE COMPLETION		
(a) Dedication	Lane dedication obtained only for conditional use Development Permit applications.	Lane dedication of up to 10 feet (3 metres) required for all Development Permit applications - with no loss of permitted floor space ratio.
#11 PARKING AT REAR	Parking permitted at front or at rear of buildings	No parking permitted in front.

NOTES:

CHARLES TO THIRD SHOPPING CORE: The above recommended zoning changes are the same as the Kitsilano West Broadway C-2C Commercial District zoning schedule - with an amendment to require lane dedication (Policy #10), as in the Fairview FM-1 zoning schedule.

FRINGE AREAS, NORTH OF CHARLES AND SOUTH OF THIRD: Zoning changes are also recommended for the fringe areas to fulfill the criteria listed in Policy #3 in the text. These changes are the same as the Kitsilano West Broadway C-2C1 Commercial District Zoning Schedule - with amendments to require lane dedication, as in the Fairview FM-1 zoning schedule, and to have the frontage limit apply only to retail and office rather than to all uses.

APPENDIX A

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

VANCOUVER CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL STUDY, December 1971.

KITSILANO AREA PLANNING PROGRAM: WEST BROADWAY PLAN, January 1976

KITSILANO AREA PLANNING PROGRAM: WEST BROADWAY PLAN - ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDY AND REZONING, July 1976

OFFICE DEVELOPMENT IN C-2 DISTRICTS AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE GROUND LEVEL USE, October 1978.

COMMERCIAL DRIVE STUDY, Margaret Meek, July 1976

COMMERCIAL DRIVE STUDY UPDATE, Anna Holbech, February 1980.

OTHER:

THE IMPACT OF ITALIANS IN GRANDVIEW-WOODLAND AS REFLECTED BY CHANGING RETAIL PATTERNS ALONG COMMERCIAL DRIVE, David Stanfield, U.B.C. student, December 1979

"LITTLE ITALY - FOR HOW LONG?," NEWEST REVIEW, William Buholzer, May 1979.

A STUDY OF THE MARPOLE DISTRICT COMMERCIAL AREA, U.B.C. School of Community and Regional Planning, Class Project, Henry Hightower, Editor, May 1979.

APPENDIX B

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 1980

APPROVED:

A. THAT the Goals and Policies as set out in the Grandview-Woodland Area Policy Plan, Part Two - Commercial Drive, be endorsed, subject to the recommendations of the subsequent reports*.

B. THAT the Director of Planning prepare amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law (C-2C and C-2C1) to submit directly to Public Hearing based on the Plan Policies outlined in the above report**.

C. THAT the Director of Planning and City Engineer report back within one year on feasibility and implementation (including source of funds) of Policies #9 (Collective Parking) and #10 (Lane Completion).

D. THAT civic staff report back on the feasibility of permitting encroachment agreements for newly constructed bay windows to encroach over the front property line.

E. THAT the City Engineer's 1981 report on expansion of the City's banner program include specific reference to funding for banners with a local theme for Commercial Drive.

F. THAT any money from the sale of closed east-west lane outlets for commercial redevelopment be approved in principle for funding to implement other policies in this Plan related to lane completion.

* Subsequent reports refer to recommendations C, D, and E.

** The C-2C and C-2C1 zoning was enacted September 1, 1981.